

C.I.A. S. 02.1

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Intelligence

✓ In a world where much is being turned around, it is interesting and rather pleasant to hear something nice about the Central Intelligence Agency.

An article on this page states that it was a negative assessment from the CIA that was a critical factor in President Johnson's change of U.S. position on Vietnam.

If so, the CIA action was a major contribution that deserves recognition as an example of its major purpose and value — the determined and dispassionate collecting of information for the President to review in making decisions.

THE CIA HAS had its problems and negative results in recent years: Things that leap to the public mind include the U-2 case, the Bay of Pigs disaster, rightwing coups that failed in Indonesia and Laos, and the exposure of under-the-table support for U.S. student and labor groups operating overseas.

The agency has also been deeply in our Vietnam involvement from the early years. But as time went on the CIA role became less military-oriented and U.S. military thinking came to be the dominant influence on policy.

In a sense, this may have allowed the CIA to take a more objective view of the overall Vietnam position.

IT IS PROBABLY considered naive to suggest the CIA get out of the "dirty tricks" business, which can range from buying votes to selected assassinations. Such operations have been standard for both sides from the early days of the Cold War.

Some more positive efforts to influence events may be considered desirable. These could include quiet efforts to help progressive leaders.

CIA support to the student and labor leaders going abroad was in this vein.

Such help should not have been given through an intelligence agency, but the hard political facts of congressional shortsightedness are that only the CIA had or could get such money at the time.

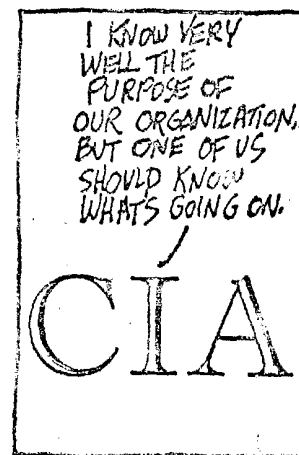
Still the main thrust of CIA activity must be in providing the best intelligence-gathering service in the world.

Perhaps 90 per cent of its activity has been devoted to this highly professional end, and it is a tough and necessary function; some of it involves satellites and spies, but much is painstaking research and analysis.

CONSIDERING THE wide scope of its continuing operational activities there, a CIA record of clearer vision in Vietnam can hardly be cited as a case for separating strict intelligence gathering from more active operations.

But it is hoped that something important has been learned about the art of bringing involvement in accord with realistic intelligence.

Pixies By Wohl



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